

Inspection of Idsall School

Coppice Green Lane, Shifnal, Shropshire TF11 8PD

Inspection dates: 12 and 13 November 2024

The quality of education **Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Sixth-form provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Inadequate

The headteacher of this school is Michelle King. The school is part of the Marches Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Sarah Finch, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Alex Fry.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a rapidly improving school. Pupils, and students in the sixth form, are happy here. Adults take the time to get to know pupils and their families really well. Pupils appreciate this and build increasingly strong and positive relationships with their teachers. This helps pupils to feel safe. Pupils are comfortable turning to staff for support if needed. They have growing confidence that any concerns will be dealt with swiftly and effectively.

Behaviour at the school has improved considerably in recent months. The school has put a great deal of effort into shifting this culture. Increasingly, pupils embody the values of kindness, integrity and empathy for others in all that they do.

The school has developed an ambitious curriculum. In the main, pupils enjoy their learning. However, the curriculum is not always delivered well, and some pupils do not achieve as well as they should. In addition, some pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) do not get the support they need in lessons to do well.

Pupils gain a sound understanding of their social and moral responsibilities during their time here. For example, many pupils frequently lead fundraising drives for a local food bank and refugee centre. Students in the sixth form also act as mentors, providing targeted support and guidance to younger pupils.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders have successfully steered the school through a period of significant challenge. Throughout this journey, they have consistently acted with the best interests of pupils at the heart of what they do. The school has been careful to take the right steps in the right order to secure sustainable improvement.

Recently, the school has revitalised the academic curriculum. Careful thought has been given to make sure that the knowledge pupils are expected to learn is laid out in detail. This work is well developed across all subjects, and the knowledge pupils encounter builds successfully on the things they already know. This helps pupils to remember what they have been taught. Sometimes, teachers use this information smartly and set challenging work for pupils. Where this happens, pupils, including students in the sixth form, make sound progress. However, too often, the activities chosen by teachers do not support pupils in learning the intended knowledge and, at times, lack ambition. In addition, when pupils do not produce their best work, this is not always challenged. Consequently, some pupils do not demonstrate positive attitudes to learning in lessons and do not achieve as well as they should.

Sometimes, teachers check on pupils' learning well, including in the sixth form. They are quick to spot gaps in knowledge and adapt their teaching skilfully to make sure any misconceptions are addressed. However, this is not consistent across most lessons; teachers do not always spot when pupils have failed to understand something they have been taught. As a result, misconceptions and gaps in pupils' knowledge persist. This hinders learning.

Until recently, pupils' individual needs were not well understood here. The school has worked smartly to refresh its approach to supporting pupils with SEND. It works in close partnership with external agencies, pupils and their families to build a comprehensive picture of pupils' individual needs. This information is shared with staff. However, despite this, teachers do not consistently use this information to adapt their teaching to take account of pupils' needs. When this happens, pupils struggle to make sense of their classwork and fall behind their peers. Sixth-form students with SEND are well supported.

The school is working to promote a culture of reading. Pupils with gaps in their reading knowledge are quickly identified and effective interventions are put in place to support them. This work is helping these pupils develop their ability and confidence to read.

There has been a significant shift in pupils' behaviour across the school in recent months. When pupils struggle to behave, targeted support and carefully planned interventions help them manage their behaviour and emotions more appropriately. Lessons are generally calm and, in the main, teachers apply the school's behaviour policy well. They have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and challenge any misbehaviour skilfully. Occasionally, poor behaviour in lessons goes unchallenged. This slows learning.

The school's work to develop pupils' personal development is a growing strength. Since the last inspection, staff have worked diligently to better understand pupils' day-to-day experiences, both in and out of school. As a result of this work, increasingly, pupils feel empowered to share concerns about important issues such as sexual harassment and racism. There are a broad range of opportunities for pupils to develop their passions outside of the classroom. A growing number of pupils, including those with SEND, benefit from these opportunities. The school has made sure that pupils, including those in the sixth form, receive helpful information about the world of work.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some staff do not use the information they have about pupils' individual needs well enough in lessons. Consequently, some pupils' SEND are not being sufficiently met, and they struggle to access the learning. The school should ensure that all staff routinely make use of the information they have about pupils' needs in order to implement effective strategies to meet these needs within lessons.
- Sometimes, teachers do not check carefully pupils' learning. This means teachers do not know when pupils are stuck and do not accurately identify the next steps pupils need to take in their learning. The school should ensure that the best practice across the school is shared and implemented across all lessons.

- Across some lessons, the work given to pupils does not support them to gain the knowledge they need and does not move them on in their learning. This limits the progress pupils make. The school should ensure that all staff provide pupils with challenging work that is well matched to the aims of the curriculum, as well as encourage all pupils to produce their best work.
- At times, pupils' behaviour distracts from the intended learning. This is not always challenged consistently well. This disrupts learning for others. The school should ensure that all staff consistently apply the new behaviour approach and challenge any misbehaviour in lessons.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	140922
Local authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	10337452
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,182
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	110
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Alex Fry
CEO of the trust	Sarah Finch
Headteacher	Michelle King
Website	www.idsallschool.org
Date of previous inspection	16 July 2024, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Information about this school

- Idsall School is one of 11 schools that comprise the Marches Academy Trust.
- The school currently uses one alternative provision for a small number of pupils. This provision is unregistered.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We

deemed the inspection a graded (section 5) inspection under the same Act. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

In accordance with section 13(4) of the Education Act 2005, His Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other senior leaders.
- An inspector met with the CEO and other members of the trust, including the chair of the trust board.
- An inspector met with three members of the local governing body (LGB), including the chair of the LGB.
- Inspectors focused their inspection activity on the following subjects. English, science, art and design and history. For each of these subjects, inspectors visited a sample of lessons, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils at social times and in formal meetings.
- Inspectors met with groups of staff and also considered the views expressed through the staff survey.
- Inspectors gathered parents' views by reviewing responses submitted to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View.

Inspection team

Alexander Laney, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Sarah Steer

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